

mad? What if some night a frenzy should seize him, and, while I am calmly sleeping by his side, he should cut my throat?

*Dr. Pills*—Send for me, madam. Such matters are peculiarly in my line.

*Mrs. Timkins*—Thank you, Doctor. I thought you were peculiarly a family physician.

*Dr. Pills*—So I am, madam; but you must remember that lunacy and its consequences are now peculiarly family disorders.

*Mrs. Timkins*—Oh, dear! this is dreadful! What am I to do? I send for you, thinking you would comfort and assist me, and you alarm me the more. How can I know whether Timkins is mad?

*Dr. Pills*—That depends entirely upon yourself.

*Mrs. Timkins*—How can that be, doctor?

*Dr. Pills*—Because in such matters the wishes of relatives and interested friends are consulted above all other considerations.

*Mrs. Timkins*—I do not understand you.

*Dr. Pills*—Let me explain the matter more clearly. If, in your opinion, there is a danger that your husband may, while you are calmly sleeping by his side, cut your throat, then there is no difficulty in obtaining the certificate of a couple of my professional friends to his lunacy, and we can have him conveyed to a place where he'll t : nobody but his keeper. If, however, you think you can c sleep by his side without getting your throat cut, then I do not see the necessity for troubling my friends.

*Mrs. Timkins*—But, doctor, his lunacy may be of a harmless description.

*Dr. Pills*—That is for you to decide.

*Enter SUSAN excitedly.*

*Susan*—Oh, mistress! master is in a dreadful rage—he banged me out of the room and said he was coming down here to have me dismissed. Oh, dear!

*Dr. Pills*—Madam—

*Mrs. Timkins*—Susan, I fear you have been indiscreet; leave the room.

*(Exit Susan holding her handkerchief to her eyes.)*

*Dr. Pills*—Madam, I understood you to say that your husband had gone to the country.

*Mrs. Timkins*—I certainly thought so.

*Dr. Pills*—But it appears he hasn't. And what am I to do?

*Mrs. Timkins (perplexed)*—It is very unfortunate! *(Brightening)* But stay—an excellent idea—a splendid opportunity! You will hear Timkins—you will be able to judge for yourself. You will go behind this screen.

*Leads him towards screen.)*